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# Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSCE-00 NSC-10 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 EB-03 OMB-01 /049 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/ NC/ V: MFORRESTER: JVH
3/29/73 EXT. 22747
APPROVED BY ARA: MR. JOHN HUGH CRIMMINS
ARA: MR. LITTLE
ARA/ NC: MR. STOCKMAN
---------- 061480
R 292020 Z MAR 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 058100

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: P, VE

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR AGUILAR' S CALL ON ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY CRIMMINS: PRESIDENT CALDERA' S STATEMENTS DURING LA TOUR

REFS: STATE 35197, CARACAS 2422

1. AT HIS REQUEST, AMBASSADOR AGUILAR CALLED ON ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY CRIMMINS AT THE DEPARTMENT, SATURDAY, MARCH 24. ACTING DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LITTLE AND VENEZUELAN DESK OFFICER FORRESTER WERE ALSO PRESENT.

2. AGUILAR OPENED BY ASKING IF MR. CRIMMINS KNEW THE REASON FOR THE CALL. MR. CRIMMINS ANSWERED NO AND ADMITTED HIS CONSIDERABLE CURIOSITY. AGUILAR EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD BEEN RECALLED MARCH 16 FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH FONMIN CALVANI. ACCORDING TO AGUILAR, CALVANI EXPRESSED

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PUZZLEMENT WITH QUESTIONS AMBASSADOR MCCLINTOCK ASKED HIM DURING THEIR MARCH 8 MEETING REGARDING A POSSIBLE SHIFT IN VENEZUELAN POLICY TOWARDS U. S., ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD CUBA AND ANTI- AMERICANISM IN VENEZUELA. AGUILAR OBSERVED THAT AMBASSADOR MCCLINTOCK HAD TRAVELLED

UNMOLESTED THROUGHOUT VENEZUELA; SIZEABLE U. S. INVESTMENT WAS FLOURISHING; GOV HAD LAUNCHED MAJOR EFFORT TO ATTRACT U. S. TOURISTS; VENEZUELA' S QTE MASSES UNQTE ARE NOT ANTI- AMERICAN; AND NONE OF MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES HAS INTRODUCED U. S. AS ISSUE IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

3. AGUILAR CONTENDED FRIENDSHIP MUST BE MEASURED IN DEEDS, NOT WORDS, MENTIONING SEEMING U. S. PROCLIVITY TOWARD PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO OUR ENEMIES THAN TO OUR FRIENDS. AS EXAMPLE AGUILAR REFERRED TO MINIMUM PRESS COVERAGE CALDERA' S STATE VISIT RECEIVED IN U. S. VERSUS COVERAGE LIKE VISIT BY CHILE' S PRESIDENT ALLENDE WOULD PROBABLY RECEIVE.

4. AGUILAR CONCLUDED SAYING VENEZUELA IS ONE OF FEW REMAINING LA DEMOCRACIES AND THAT SPECIAL U. S.- VENEZUELA RELATIONS ARE HISTORIC, THUS AMBASSADOR MCCLINTOCK' S QUERY RE A CHANGING VENEZUELAN POLICY TOWARDS U. S. SEEMS INEXPLICABLE AND WITHOUT BASIS. AGUILAR ALSO ASKED WHETHER AMBASSADOR HAD ACTED WITH KNOWLEDGE OR INSTRUCTIONS FROM DEPARTMENT.

5. MR. CRIMMINS RESPONDED THAT AMBASSADOR MCCLINTOCK HAD CALLED ON FONMIN CALVANI AT THE BEHEST OF AND WITH AUTHORIZATION OF DEPARTMENT. HE CITED AS MAJOR FACTORS PROMPTING QUERY ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE TO GOV POSITON OF REPORTED CALDERA STATEMENTS : THE LONG HISTORY OF CLOSE U. S.- VENEZUELAN RELATIONS, THE FACT THAT VENEZUELA IS INDEED ONE OF FEW LA DEMOCRACIES AND A KEY COUNTRY IN THE AREA; VENEZUELA' S LEADING ROLE IN THE HEMISPHERE; AND PRESIDENT CALDERA' S STATURE AS A PERSON AND STATESMAN. BECAUSE OF THESE FACTORS, MR. CRIMMINS CONTINUED, THE DEPARTMENT ATTACHES SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE TO WHAT PRESIDENT CALDERA SAYS AND WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAYS CAN HAVE SPECIAL WEIGHT IN THE HEMISPHERE. PLACING INQUIRY TO CALVANI IN BROAD





CONTEXT, MR. CRIMMINS NOTED GROWING TREND IN HEMISPHERIC

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RELATIONS FOR STRIDENT RHETORIC AND STERILE CONFRONTATION. FACT IS THAT CALDERA' S STATEMENTS, AS REPORTED IN BRAZILIAN PUBLICATION QTE MANCHETE UNQTE, GAVE THESE PRONOUNCEMENTS HEMISPHERIC IMPACT AND COULD HAVE INDICATED THAT GOV WAS ASSOCIATING ITSELF WITH

NEGATIVE CHORUS.

6. MR. CRIMMINS SAID THAT CALVANI' S RESPONSE AND AGUILAR' S OWN COMMENTS FULLY SATISFIED THE DEPARTMENT' S QUERY, AND HE STRESSED THAT OUR QUESTIONS WERE NOT BASED ON ANY A PRIORI POLITICAL JUDGMENT. WE HAD, THROUGH THE INQUIRY, SOUGHT REASSURANCE ABOUT GOV' S ATTITUDE, AND IT HAD BEEN GIVEN.

7. AGUILAR, ALTHOUGH INDICATING HE WAS NOT FULLY CONVINCED, THANKED MR. CRIMMINS FOR THIS EXPLANATION AND SAID HE WOULD RELAY HIS RESPONSE TO CARACAS. CONCLUDING, MR. CRIMMINS SUGGESTED THAT FONMIN CALVANI, IF HE CONSIDERED FURTHER DISCUSSION USEFUL, MIGHT WISH TO PURSUE THE MATTER FURTHER WITH SECRETARY ROGERS DURING THE OASGA MEETING NEXT MONTH. AGUILAR SAID HE WOULD PASS THIS SUGGESTION TO CALVANI.

8. FINALLY, AGUILAR NOTED THAT HIS APPROACH TO THE DEPARTMENT WAS EXTREMELY CONFIDENTIAL, HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED WITH OTHER GOV OFFICIALS, AND THAT FINMIN OBERTO, THEN IN WASHINGTON, DID NOT KNOW WHY AGUILAR HAD BEEN RECALLED FOR CONSULTATION. ROGERS

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